

- *Budget Increases Funding for Veterans* - Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) joined a majority of the House of Representatives in approving a vision for America's long-term economic success and fiscal responsibility by passing President Obama's budget blueprint. With smart, growth-targeted investments in health care, education, and clean, renewable energy sources, this blueprint will build upon the economic incentives of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to ensure the nation's economic revival, while also managing to cut the federal deficit by more than half by 2013. Congressman Hall touted the additional \$800 million budget for veterans services added by Congress above the Administration's proposal. The Obama budget calls for the biggest increase for veterans programs ever requested by an Administration. The House Budget Resolution (H.Con.Res. 85) provides for a \$5.5 billion increase over fiscal year 2009, an increase of 11.5% for veterans health care and other programs. "This blueprint goes beyond simply treating the symptoms of our economic crisis by investing in programs that will allow America to not only survive but thrive economically as we move forward," Hall said. "For the first time in a long while, we have a smart, straightforward and responsible budget that will balance priorities for growth with controlling federal spending."

The House-passed budget provides a significant down-payment on health care reform designed to ensure America's long-term economic strength through helping to ease the financial burden on both working families and the federal government. Investments in America's future workforce are also included in the budget, with funding to improve the quality of and access to public education and expand assistance for college education, making certain that the next generation of American workers is competitive in the global workplace. And to help achieve energy independence and create green-collar jobs for American workers, the budget makes sweeping investments in developing new sources of renewable energy and energy efficiency programs.

This budget marks not only an aggressive push to revive the American economy but also a firm commitment to restoring fiscal responsibility and accountability by the federal government. It manages to invest in building a stronger economy without increasing the deficit and will actually reduce the deficit by more than half in four years. In order to do so, the budget requires increased oversight of government spending programs to reduce fraud and abuse and mandates that new spending be "deficit-neutral" using the pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) principal. This is also the most realistic budget in years, including the costs of America's overseas deployments and funding for disaster relief that have previously not been included in its total.

"This budget offers a path for long-term growth that invests in our country's strengths, shows fiscal responsibility and most importantly is honest with the American people," Hall added.